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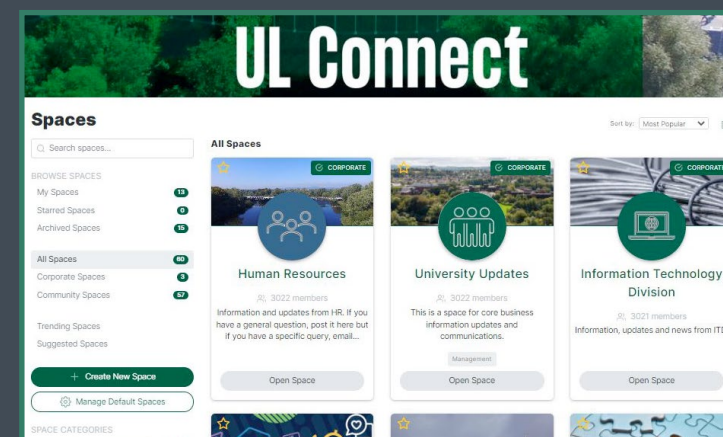
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Transforming the Student Experience >>



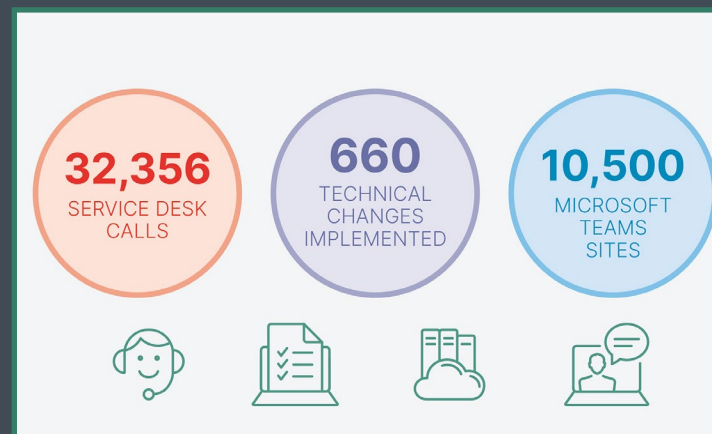
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Thank you colleagues and students for taking the time to peruse our latest ITD newsletter. As we conclude another academic year and head into the summer months, the staff of ITD wanted to take the opportunity to give colleagues and students a further flavour of the activities of our professional services team during 2021-2022. Throughout this recent unprecedented period, since the pandemic onset in March 2020, our exceptionally committed team in ITD have endeavoured to improve service levels to our campus community. In parallel with delivering day-to-day services and IT Operations, we have partnered and collaborated with UL departments and colleagues across the Campus in a variety of diverse Digital Change and Transformation projects and initiatives.

## Welcome to the latest newsletter by University of Limerick's Information Technology Division (ITD)

The following is an overview of some of the projects that ITD have been involved with:

- A summary of the latest Digital Transformation projects around our Student Records Eco-System enabling new portal self-service capability for staff and students. The outcomes from this work has resulted in better staff and student experience and greater operational efficiency in the Academic Registry Division.
- How our Educational Technology team from ITD have leveraged leading edge Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in lecture theatres, to enhance student engagement and to enhance the overall student experience for students availing of hybrid learning.
- The Communications team within Marketing and Communications launched the UL Connect platform to enhance staff digital communication and collaboration. The technical implementation of the platform entailed significant technical integration and project management input from ITD. We present a flavour of what this entailed for the ITD team.
- Discover our new UL Microsoft 365 Training Centre which enhances communication & collaboration. In addition read a little about ITD's involvement in the "LevUL UP" Digital Skills Development Programme which is a targeted Digital Skills enhancement programme for students.
- Find out about a range of our Digital supports and training available for the benefit of UL staff.
- A summary of UL Student Feedback from recently conducted student consultations about student IT Services and Technologies used during the pandemic period.
- Digital metrics and data points about the Digital activity in UL over the last 12 months.
- The partnership between the UL School of Education and ITD in delivering 2 national Professional Development Programmes for school educators.
- And last but certainly by no-means least ... meet the team @UL Reception.

I would like to thank all of our UL colleagues and students across the campus for your ongoing collegiality and support during the Academic year that is now concluding. I sincerely want to thank all of our team in ITD for their ongoing professionalism and commitment to strive for service excellence throughout the academic year. Thank you to the contributors and editors from our team who compiled this newsletter on behalf of the IT team.

Wishing all staff and students of the University a wonderful summer and hopefully a well-deserved break at some stage during the summer months. I hope you enjoy this latest edition.

**Liam O'Reilly**  
Director,  
Information Technology Division,  
University of Limerick.

# TRANSFORMING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

In keeping with the University’s ongoing commitment to improving the student experience and supporting the digital transformation of university processes, the Academic Services Team, ITD embarked on the Self-Service Letters project in collaboration with our colleagues in Academic Registry, Graduate and Professional Studies, UL Global, Digitary, STU3 and Clarion Consulting. This project was part of the scope of Phase III of the Tactical Stabilisation Programme – Foundations for Digital Transformation.

The objectives of the Self-Service Letters Project were to:

- Improve self-service opportunities for students
- Reduce manual effort by staff & associated risks
- Reduce turnaround time
- Provide an automated & secure document portal
- Use existing technology deployed for graduates
- Unify how students can request standard documents from GPS, UL Global and AR.

This secure 3 step process solution is required to allow for the distribution of certified documents as well as a new bulk sharing facility to students, graduates and/or others, facilitating the onward transmission of the secure document to third parties such as employers, other HEIs, etc.

The successful implementation of this project has:

- Removed over 10,000 manually produced documents annually.
- Issued 15,000 registration letters securely, resulting in a 77% FTE saving across three divisions.



**Above:** Photo of team. Back row (l-r): Sinead Cooney (Research); Mark Brophy (Academic Services, ITD); Rose Moorhead (GPS); Yvonne Griffin (Academic Services, ITD). Front (l-r): Maureen Tucker (AR); Jean Chaplin (Academic Services, ITD); Fintan Breen (AR).

## SINCE THE PROJECT WENT LIVE IN JANUARY 2022:



DOCUMENTS  
ISSUED  
IN TOTAL



DOCUMENTS  
ACCESSED  
BY STUDENTS



DOCUMENTS  
SHARED WITH THIRD  
PARTIES BY STUDENTS



DOCUMENTS  
SHARED WITH THIRD  
PARTIES BY UL

### TESTIMONIAL

*To understand the needs of the teams in the three divisions (AR, GPS & UL Global) and of students, ITD worked closely with Clarion, Digitary and with STU3 to ensure that our requirements were translated into user-friendly screens and processes. The outcome means reduced manual effort across three divisions and improved service availability and turnaround time, providing a better experience for both staff and students.*

**Fintan Breen,**  
**Head of Customer Service,**  
**Academic Registry.**

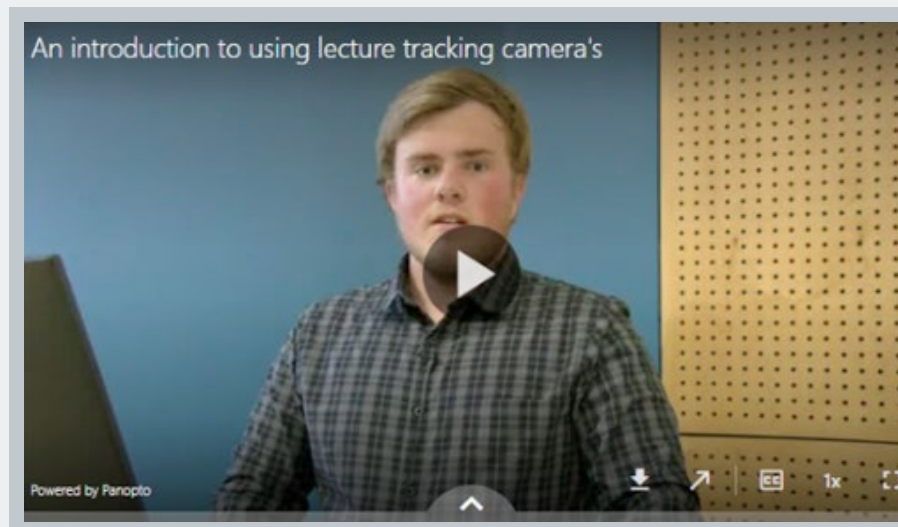
# Move to Improve

To enhance our student digital experience, ITD have installed Aver PTZ (Pan, Tilt & Zoom) Tracking Cameras into 11 Lecture Theatres. Using AI technology, PTZ cameras allow a lecturer to move freely around the podium whilst remaining on camera. This technology has enriched the quality of live lecture recordings available to students.

Unlike a standard webcam, PTZ cameras are set further away from the lecturer (typically mounted to a wall or ceiling) and are designed to track the presenters as they move around the podium. For ease of use, full camera controls (PTZ camera on/off, tracking on/off) are available directly from the podium.

As PTZ cameras have been installed in addition to the existing webcams, lecturers now have the option to choose the technology that works best for them.

## How does the magic happen?



**Pictured above:** Kieran B. Murphy (Coop Placement, ITD).

Click [HERE](#) to hear Kieran explain all.



**Pictured above:** Alan Hayes (Education Technology, ITD), Niall A. Collins (Education Technology, ITD).



# SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS

ITD has successfully collaborated with our academic partners at the School of Education to provide technical knowledge and pedagogical support to 2 major national programmes. The Professional Diploma in Mathematics for Teaching (PDMT) is aimed at enhancing the quality of maths education delivered at post-primary level. The Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership (PDSL) is designed to prepare aspiring school leaders for senior leadership roles.

The Education Technology Team in ITD have played a prominent role in the development of both programmes from the initial stages of course design and pedagogical development to the present day where considerable technical and logistical support is provided on an ongoing basis.

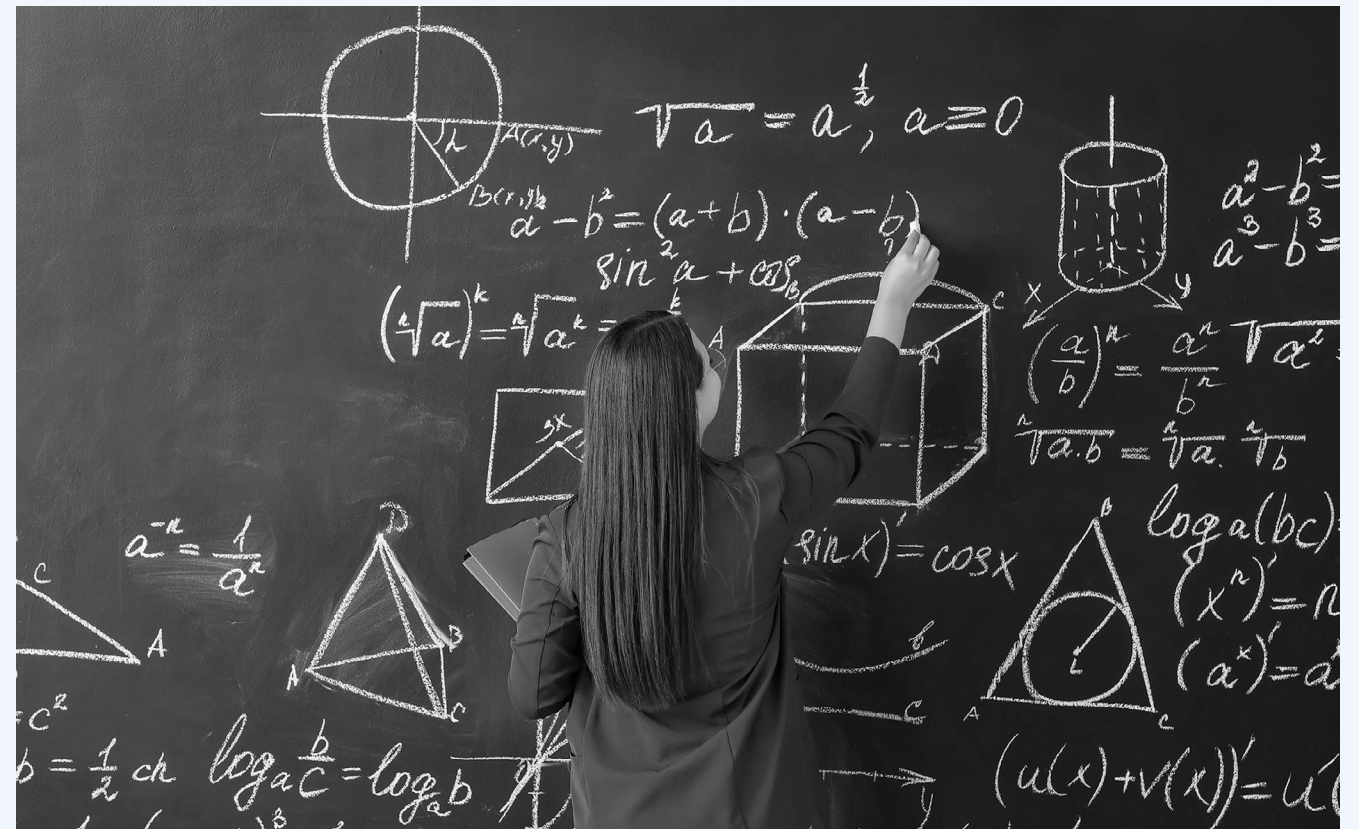
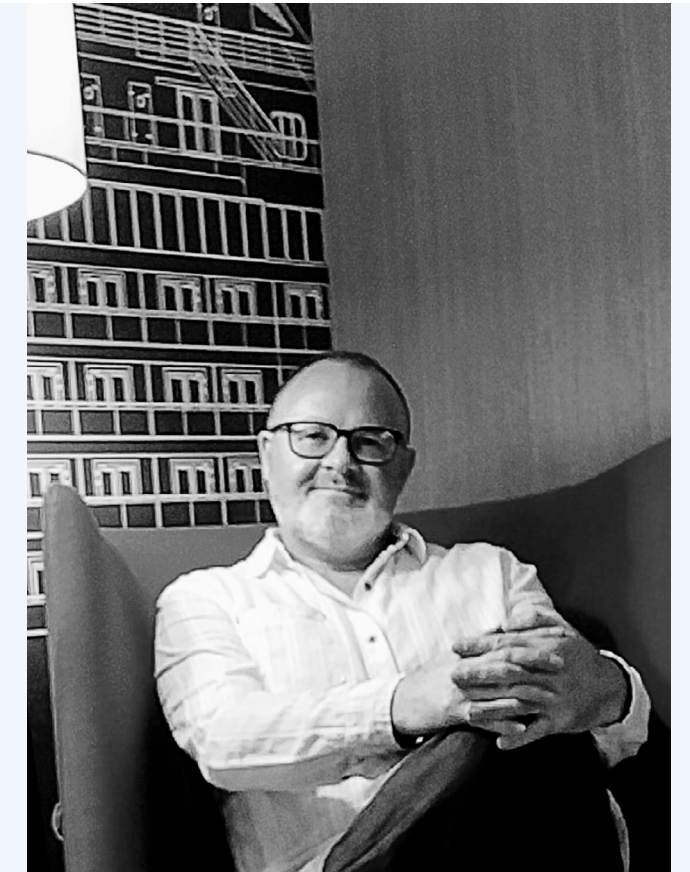
Both programmes are delivered outside of normal school hours using a Blended Learning approach and are supported by a dedicated Education Technologist. The team have worked creatively to facilitate these programmes using a variety of online technologies (Sulis, Big Blue Button, the Assessment Tool, Online Forum,

Turnitin, MS Teams, MS Teams live events and Panopto) and by providing flexibility and responsiveness in the delivery of service.

20 weekly online sessions are delivered concurrently to each of the sites as part of the PDSL programme. To facilitate these sessions, the Educational Technologist sources, trains, and manages a team of moderators to assist tutors during online tutorials & webinars, as well as providing training, ongoing support and workshops for participants. Online support of students and tutors during live tutorials has consistently been identified by participants as a key factor for the success of the programmes, greatly enhancing the quality of the overall learning experience.

The Education Technology team are delighted to be involved with both programmes and look forward to continuing this successful partnership with the School of Education.

**Pictured above:** Siobhan Gleeson Hayes (Education Technology, ITD) and Emmet Flynn (Education Technology, ITD).

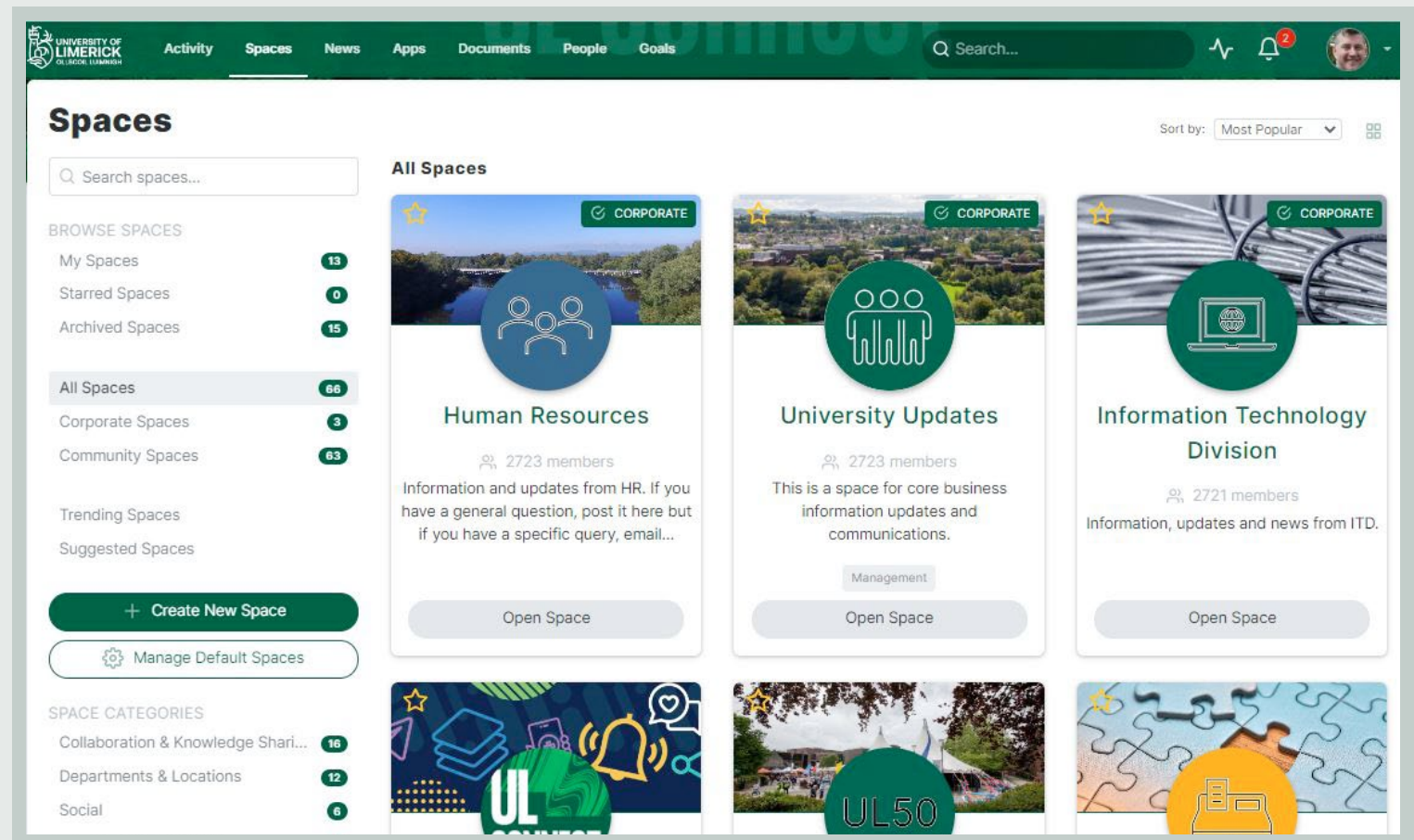
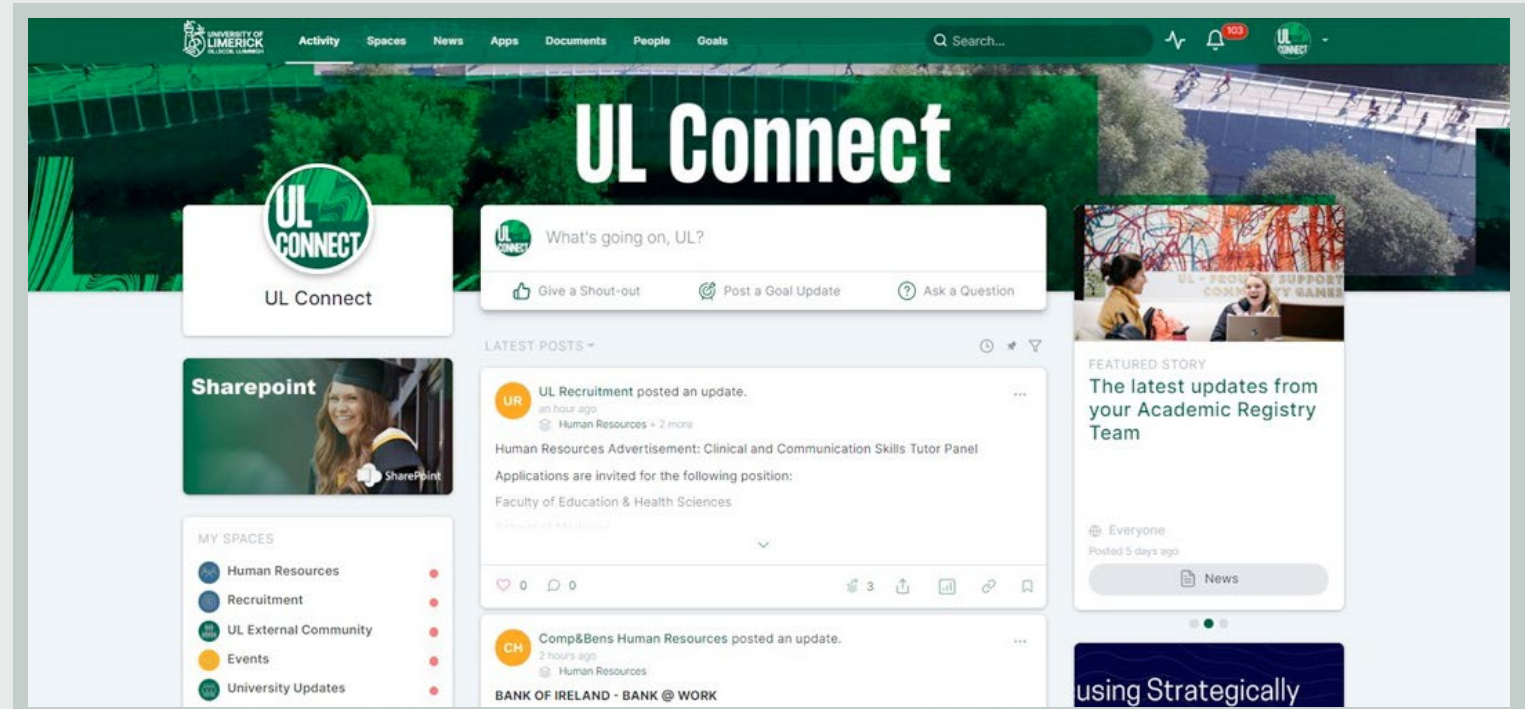


# Technically Enabling UL Connect

The implementation of UL Connect was approved by Executive Committee in 2021. Driven by the University's Internal Communication Manager, with assistance from HR and ITD, the platform is a tool that enables our employees to inform, engage and collaborate more effectively. It allows our staff to post, read and share content & videos seamlessly, leading to an open and instant connection with their peers. UL Connect has vastly reduced the large volumes of non-work related e-mails, which instead have been replaced by activity feeds in their respective Spaces.

ITD played a pivotal role in the facilitation of the successful deployment of UL Connect. Involved in the early planning sessions, ITD implemented the Single Sign On for the platform, enabling it to be the default homepage for users on Edge and Google Chrome internet browsers, along with retiring the various distribution mailing groups. ITD are also currently working on the technical elements of automating the process of feeding UL Connect with the University's staff user base on a scheduled basis.

In a time of blended working, there was no greater need than to streamline our communications across the campus, with that, UL Connect continues to grow each day, currently hosting up to 1,400 active users per day. If you have not accessed UL Connect yet, please click on the following [LINK](#).



## ADVANCING DIGITAL SKILLS

### UL MICROSOFT 365 TRAINING CENTRE

Discover how you can leverage our UL Microsoft 365 Training Centre to communicate, collaborate and improve productivity. This portal facilitates self-training on Microsoft 365 applications and enables ad-hoc knowledge enhancement. It's available to UL staff and students and provides training resource for Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, and OneDrive.

Since launch date, the portal has had:

**17,200+ visits by 1100+ unique visitors to the UL 365 Training Centre**

The Training Centre provides you everything to start with. You can watch tailored UL video tutorials which are prefixed with UL- and the Microsoft materials are updated on a quarterly basis to reflect any changes or updates.

Click [HERE](#) to see what it's all about.



### LevUL Up Digital Skills Development Programme



**Pictured above:** UL Student with Elizabeth Sexton (Service Desk, ITD).

**LevUL Up** is a structured, informal, non-accredited and digital skills development programme for UL students. Coordinated by CTL, while in collaboration with the Library, ITD and the Educational Assistive Technology Centre (EATC), the programme is run in association with the Irish Universities Association **Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning project**.

Driven in a direct response to ULs INDEx student survey finding in November, 2019, we listened to what our UL student Community had to say. The programme provides UL students with self-service access to a Digital Skills Awareness Courses and Workshops, to help develop their digital learning skills and literacies. The programme enables our

students to develop the confidence and skills for success as a student, graduate, citizen and future employee or employer.

ITD played a vital role in the programme, by delivering several Workshops to the Student Community as part of this initiative over the last two semesters, helping to empower our Students.

Over the past 3 semesters, Spring 2021-2022, **5,110 students** have registered for these Digital Skills and Literacies Workshops. In Spring 2022, **560 students** enrolled in the Digital Skills Awareness Course. Recordings of all LevUL Up workshops from Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 can be viewed on the following [LINK](#).

## HOW HAVE WE HELPED? LET'S ASK!

After conducting a mini survey, here is some positive feedback from our student community

### How has the High-Speed Wifi Connectivity implementation to all locations around campus improved your learning experience?

It has been great help in regards to taking meeting calls or classes online while on campus.

My own data on my phone doesn't work sometimes, so having high-speed internet all over campus makes accessing all my materials and doing assignments much easier.

### ITD offer several collaboration services such as MS Teams, One Drive – how have these services benefited you during the pandemic?

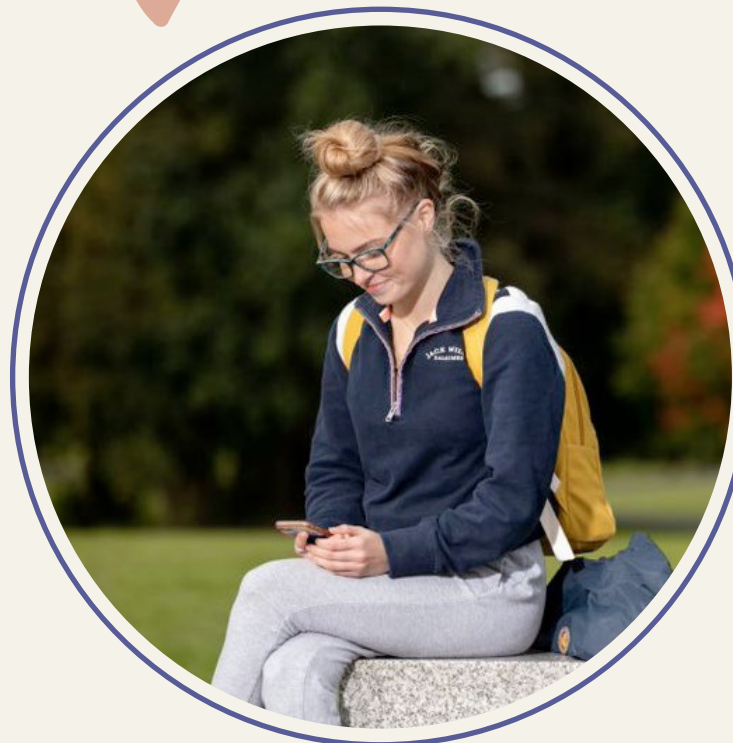
These services meant I could continue to work and collaborate during the pandemic, if anything, they allowed me to work more efficiently and I've adopted them heavily into my daily routine.

Amazing, MS Teams was one of the main video-calling software's I have used for Covid, and it was great.

### The ITD Service Desk share instructions and videos on TOPdesk, our website and via social media – How have these enhanced your interaction with tools on offer?

They help in reminding me how many services are provided. Encouraged me to start downloading free software such as Endnote.

They're very helpful when it comes to learning about and using the tools. They've definitely made me use the tools more than I would have before.





**Easy Software access to Office 365, SPSS and NVIVO has been made available for all students – how has this helped you?**

Office 365 made all my work very interconnected and easy to access. It also made sure all my work is stored online and easily shared with my peers.

I'm always using Office 365 and SPSS so it's such a relief that I don't have to pay for them myself.

**How has the Panopto lecture capture enhanced your studying experience?**

Very well, it was a godsend during Covid, and the same goes for BigBlueButton.

Panopto has been great for online lectures - the quality is great and you can always go back and rewatch.

**Do you find that our managed print service has made the printing process easier for you?**

I was a student in UL when the print service was an automatic print out and you needed to dig between the green sheets with your student number for your print job. The new print system is much more efficient and very straight forward to use.

Yes! Definitely better than the old system. Before it was such a hassle, but now I've been printing more on campus.



## Tips & Tricks made available by ITD for Staff & Students

### 24/7 Password Reset Service - Self-Service Password Reset (SSPR)

This service allows you to reset your password, or request a new password from anywhere, at any time, without the need to contact the ITD Service Desk.

### 24/7 Support available on our TOPdesk Self-service Portal?

Go to <https://ul.topdesk.net> to view our knowledge base; request a license code or download software; to log a new call or manage/update an existing call; or to see information on service disruptions/outages.

### One Device or Two?

Now that we are moving to a mixture of onsite & remote working it is time to think about the devices you are using. Most users can work with just one device, & ITD recommends using your UL provided laptop with a docking station & peripherals attached. Desktops that are no longer required can be repurposed (if still in warranty) or disposed of. Go to the Blended Working tile on TOPdesk (<https://ul.topdesk.net/>) for more information.

### Windows Devices

ITD working with our colleagues in Procurement & HEAnet recently signed a 12-month contract with Dell for the supply of Windows devices. Go to the **UL Dell Shopper Portal** for the list of devices available and to generate a quote and for the first time Dell is now providing accidental damage cover as an optional extra.

### Induction material for new staff and new students

Are you creating induction/orientation material, or providing training on how to access IT services available at UL? Did you know ITD has developed Quick Start Guides for new Staff and new Students? These guides are available from the ITD website, see **Staff IT Services** or **Student IT Services**.

### Microsoft Office for Free!

UL staff & students can download & install Microsoft Office 365 including Outlook, Teams, Excel etc on 5 devices. Go to <https://portal.office.com> and select 'Install Office'. As always, access to UL systems and data must comply with the IT Security Policy, the Acceptable Usage Policy, and associated procedures.

### Self-Service Password Reset (SSPR)

TO RESET YOUR PASSWORD FOLLOW THE BELOW STEPS:



Go to <https://portal.office.com/>

Enter your email address

Select Can't access your account?

Follow onscreen instructions



Scan the QR code to access



# IT All Adds Up

Some ITD Activity over the last 12 months, led and supported by the work and talent of our ITD team

**32,356**

SERVICE DESK  
CALLS



**660**

TECHNICAL  
CHANGES  
IMPLEMENTED



**10,500**

MICROSOFT  
TEAMS  
SITES



**378,602**

MICROSOFT  
TEAMS  
MEETINGS



**1.1m**

WIFI  
CONNECTIONS



**24m**

EMAILS  
PROCESSED

**162,967**

HOURS OF  
PANOPTO CONTENT  
CONSUMED

**143,138**

SULIS TESTS &  
QUIZZES

**3.7m**

SULIS LOGINS

**7.55**

Petabytes  
DATA  
BACKED UP

# MEET THE RECEPTION TEAM

*'If you're lost you can look  
and you will find me, time after time ...'*

(Cyndi Lauper)

Whether you have lost your keys, your ID card, your way, or even yourself, the team at Main Reception are here to help!

Dee, Mamie, Marie, Emily & Carmel have a combined 42+ years' experience and not even David Attenborough knows the UL terrain, its many inhabitants & its ways better than they do.

Google maps can't help you when you need to find room C1-063 etc., but we can. Anxious parents and lonely students may not know where to go or who to turn to, but we do. Dealing with a multitude of queries from across the globe, providing a listening and compassionate ear, guiding current, past & future students, visitors, & staff, the range of skills and knowledge needed at Reception are many & varied.

Available onsite on the ground floor of the Main Building, not even a pandemic is enough to keep us from showing up. Whatever your query or concern, call in or call by and get the assistance you need, delivered with a smile and a human touch.



**Pictured above:** Main Reception Team; Dorothy Kealy, Mamie Hayes, Carmel Hayes, Marie A. O'Connell.



**ITD eNews editorial team**

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